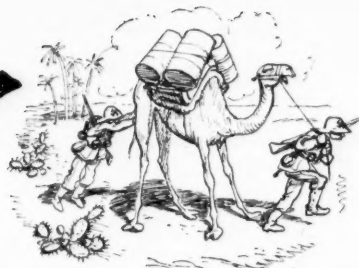


PUNCH

OR
THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CC No. 5231

June 11 1941

Charivaria

"GERMANY is still badly fed," says a newspaper report. Attempts, however, are being made to speed up the theft of bacon from Denmark.

"Japan won't declare war on America," says a writer. We doubt, however, if many Americans take this threat seriously.

The rationing of cloth has dismayed those unscrupulous gardeners who always relied on their tailors to supply patterns for fastening up the creepers.

With reference to their proposed meeting it is said that HITLER is taking a double with him in case STALIN wants to kiss him.



A lady advertises for two canaries and a cat which disappeared during her household spring-cleaning. It is quite likely they left at the same time.

A music-hall performer says he frequently rehearses impersonations of famous film stars while walking in country lanes. This must make it very confusing for a policeman demanding his identity card.



Evening dress is *de rigueur* at New York film first-nights. On a recent occasion a late arrival in the dress circle had a short scene from the picture projected on her back.

An incendiary bomb fell into a bath half full of water just as the householder was about to have a bath. For a moment he thought the geyser was in one of its temperamental moods.

"Salt water serves many useful purposes, one uses it for a gargle, for cleansing cabbages of caterpillars and many other things," writes a schoolboy in an essay. It is doubtful whether HITLER appreciates its true worth.

Although theatre programmes are smaller there is still room to inform the audience who the cigarettes, shoes, wigs, costumes and plays are by.

Last With the News

"What a disaster!
I have been made stationmaster
At Hamm.
Oh d—n!"

Punch, November 20, 1940.

"HUN-FORTUNATE

Recitation by German railway official
on his promotion:—

'Oh, what a disaster!
I've just been appointed station-
master
At Hamm!
Damn!'

Evening Standard, May 23, 1941.



This Week's Metaphor

"The Italians clearly reckoned on widespread panic in Malta, and on the people whom they had bribed or black-mailed in the past, and on a larger number of miserable hesitants, who, being neither fish nor flesh nor good red herring, sat on the fence watching events, hiding in their dug-outs to see which way the wind would ultimately blow."—*Malta Paper.*

Boy Scouts are trained to keep themselves dry in any kind of weather. They never know when two of them will be rubbed briskly together to start a camp-fire.



"It is not advisable to inquire why the papers are late this morning."

Little Talks

DON'T you think it's a monstrous thing for the Germans to violate the neutrality of Eire by dropping bombs on Dublin?

I do think it's a monstrous thing for the Germans to violate the neutrality of Eire by dropping bombs on Dublin.

I'm astonished that I've not seen more long leading articles condemning the violation of the neutrality of Eire by the dropping of bombs on Dublin.

I don't think I've seen any long leading articles condemning the violation of the neutrality of Eire by the dropping of bombs on Dublin.

I hope we're not becoming callous about the fate of neutrals.

I hope not, indeed.

After all, the neutrals are neutral.

Bless them.

They have nothing to do with the absurd war we started for our own private amusement.

And Eire has as much right to be neutral as Egypt. Or the Swedes. Or Turkey. Or the Dutch.

Is Egypt neutral?

I never quite know.

Anyhow, I at least protest in the strongest terms against the monstrous violation of the neutrality of Eire by the dropping of bombs on Dublin.

Good. And I'm sure the Germans will pay the greatest attention.

Yes. I gather, by the way, that the German invasion of Crete was really a great failure.

Yes. If only we'd had an airfield half-way between Crete and Libya things would have been very different.

Silly of us not to make one. I notice one thing, by the way, with pardonable pride. We've done for airdromes.

What?

You remember a ghastly period when all aeroplanes came down at "air-dromes." I protested bitterly. Indeed, I think I was the first to suggest "air-field"—and was heartily laughed at, of course. "Flying-field" would have been better still. Anyhow, airdrome's done for. And I'm still hoping to kill "paratroops."

"Say not the struggle naught availeth."
I see that the Government are even taking a mild interest in canals at last.

Yes. That makes me laugh a little. Year after year I was snubbed about canals, by one Minister of Transport after another. And now—

And now, who is it they put on to investigating the possibilities of canal-traffic? A big pot in the railway-world, which did more than anything else to kill the canals!

Dear old Frank Pick. Seven or eight years ago I was trying to get him interested in water-traffic. And by now I bet he is.

Heigh-ho! What do you think of Oliver's pant-ration?

I've been trying to write a poem about it. It begins:

*"I can't think why they want more coupons
For father's pants than mother's
jupons."*

But they don't. Look. "Men and boys—other undergarments—4. Women and girls—petticoat, etcetera—4."

Ah, but "Women and girls—other undergarments" is 3. And look at

"combinations." "Men—woollen combinations" is 8—

Do men wear woollen combinations? Don't be irrelevant. And "other material" is 5. So that every way the woman scores.

But, seriously, do men wear woollen combinations?

And then, look at night-shirts. Men's night-shirts, 8—

Do men wear night-shirts?

Shut up! But women's night-dresses cost only 6.

Well, why not?

Because they buy so many more. And the whole idea, I thought, was that people should buy less. For every woollen night-shirt a man buys—

I don't believe men do buy—

In that case my argument is stronger still.

You can't have heard the wireless oration of the President of the Board of Trade. He doesn't mind if men are shabby; but he wants women still to be smart. Jolly good show.

There's no reason, surely, why men shouldn't be warm?

If you're still going on about woollen night-shirts and combinations, I tell you I don't believe—

Pyjamas, then.

Oh, but pyjamas are the same—8 coupons, male or female.

So they are. I withdraw. Well, look at socks. Men's socks—3; Girls' socks (ankle-length)—1.

But stockings are the same—3.

Yes, but how many pairs of stockings do you buy to every ten pairs your wife buys? Some of these girls buy fifty pairs a year.

I don't buy stockings. And I don't buy woollen night—

And I'll tell you what will happen. The girls will start a new fashion—socks (ankle-length)—1 coupon only.

That will be delightful. We shall see their dear little calves.

You don't seem to take this war very seriously.

I think it's an excellent scheme. The girls will please us by looking nice; and we shall please ourselves by wearing our oldest clothes. And no wife will be able to say a word.

I know. No more of: "Isn't it about time you threw that horrid old coat away, dear?"

We shall just say: "On the contrary, my dear, I have a worse one at the bottom of my locker at the golf-club, which I propose to wear at the Wilton wedding."

"The collar frayed? I know, my dove, but the President of the Board of Trade prefers it so."

"Yes, darling, I have noticed there is a shiny patch on the seat, but it is the sheen of patriotism and duty."

It's a bit hard, though, on the chaps who always buy their socks and handkerchiefs in ones, and had no notice of these proceedings.

I know. I never change a sock till there's more hole than sock—and then I throw the whole thing away. And I buy handkerchiefs whenever I have a cold or hay-fever. This thing catches me completely short.

And what about the poor old theatre? Here's another nice little pat on the pants from H.M. Gov. As it is, many actors lend their own clothes to help the management out. But, if they can't renew them, I don't know what occurs.

It's the world's wonder the theatre

carries on at all. What with bombs, entertainment-tax, bombs, black-out, bombs, Sunday-closing, bombs, purchase-tax, bombs, E.P.D., bombs, conscription, bombs—and now, glad-rag rationing—

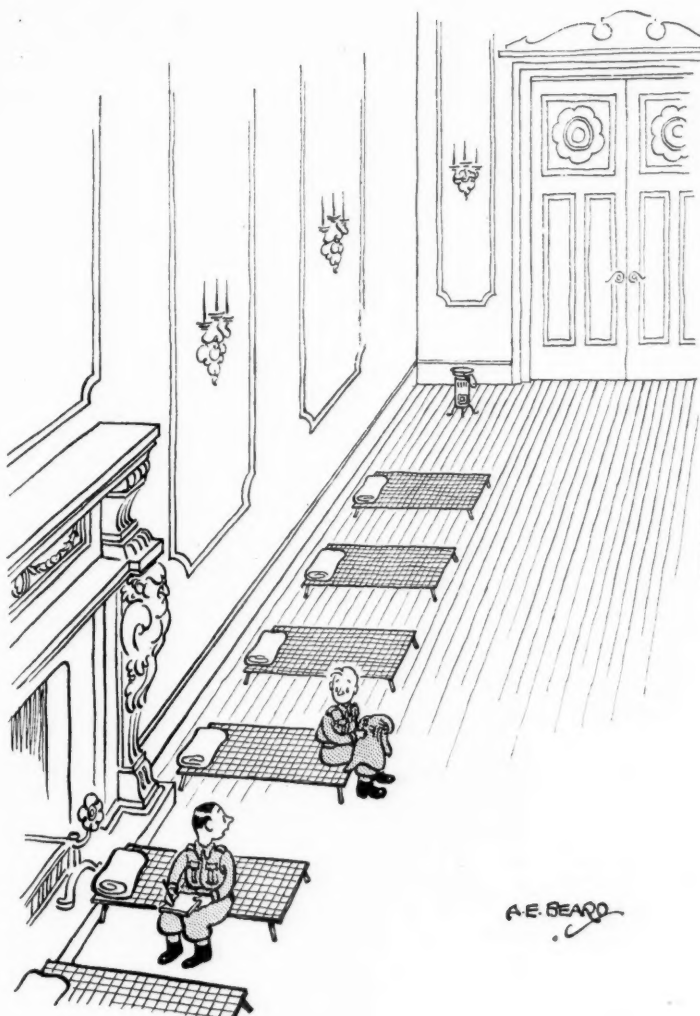
But will H.M. Gov. worry? They'll not stand in a— By the way, that's one good thing, anyhow.

What?

No statesman will ever again say: "I do not stand here in a white sheet." Because, if he does, someone will yell from the back of the hall: "Why not, you fool? It's the only thing you don't have to have no coupons for!"

And they'll soon be asking coupons for the Wearin' of the Green.

A. P. H.



"How d'yer spell 'cosy,' Bert?"

To His Old Pipe

ONCE, gentle Pipe, in years gone by
We were fast friends, were you and I—
I swore our love should never die
Till Love himself were dead;
But friendship stays not always green
Nor bowls perennially clean,
And soon I took my nicotine
In reeking tubes instead.

But now the nation stands in need
And reeking tubes are scarce indeed;
Henceforth I buy no papered weed,
Let others claim my share;
Come, good my Briar, once again
Waft gales of sweetness o'er the plain,
Discourse, my Syrinx, to your swain
Some soft luxurious air!

Else, if you must perforce discharge
That ancient fume of dying marg.,
Then circumfuse it wide and large
In dark and sulphurous jets,
That men may cry for you to cease,
And for their atmospheric peace
May give or lend or even lease
Innumerable cigarettes.

o o

The Human Mentality

THE human mentality is a very peculiar thing. I have often had occasion to remark it and never more so than—we have plenty of sugar and if you take it in tea on no account hesitate—never more so than last Sunday at half-past five.”

“Plenty of sugar!” said Laura—utterly disregarding all Mrs. Battlegate’s statements about the human mentality. As she said afterwards, one can hear about the human mentality at practically any time from Mrs. Battlegate, and she always makes it sound peculiar, but what she had said about having plenty of sugar seemed too extraordinary to be true.

“We are well off for lump-sugar and biscuits, cheese and chocolate are both very difficult, and the General’s marmalade is simply non-existent. Simply non-existent,” said Mrs. Battlegate. “But, as I think I was saying, the mind works in a most extraordinary way.”

“Some kinds of cheese aren’t rationed,” Laura said—and Aunt Emma and Mrs. Pledge, also at the tea-table, reacted practically simultaneously with the single word: “Which?”

Cousin Florence only produced a pencil and a very old visiting-card from her handbag, and sat there waiting.

“The sort that has holes in it.”

One distinctly heard Aunt Emma exclaim “Camembert!” and Mrs. Pledge said “Stilton!” in rather a doubtful voice.

Cousin Florence quietly asked Laura whether Gorgonzola was spelt with an S or two Zs.

“It so happened,” Mrs. Battlegate announced in a clear, loud and authoritative voice—“it so happened that on Sunday afternoon last I underwent a very singular experience.”

“They were *not* bombs,” said Aunt Emma. “Positively not. I heard them myself, and I said ‘Egbert! Those were

German bombs. I know the sound of them perfectly well.’ I am bound to say that my husband contradicted me flatly—a thing I’ve scarcely ever known him to do in more than thirty years—and said he was certain they were only the men at work in the old quarry, and not bombs at all.”

“And what were they really, Aunt Emma?”

“The men at work in the old quarry, dear,” replied Aunt Emma.

Mrs. Battlegate explained that her experience had nothing whatever to do with bombs or quarries, and was not, in fact, on the material plane at all.

“I have a perfect horror of anything like table-turning,” Cousin Florence returned.

And Aunt Emma at once supported her with an interesting but rather too long account of some happenings that had never really been explained in a country rectory quite close to Uncle Egbert’s sister’s husband’s parish.

One felt, both from the atmosphere and from some rather indescribable expression on Mrs. Battlegate’s face, that she had more to say.

She was not, however, able to say it until Mrs. Pledge had related the full story of a visit that she had once, as a girl, paid to a crystal-gazer. And after hearing what the crystal-gazer had said about the exciting and romantic future for which Mrs. Pledge (then Miss Postgaze) was destined, one quite understood why she ended up by saying that the whole thing was nonsense and a complete waste of seven shillings and sixpence.

Mrs. Battlegate then, speaking more loudly than usual, returned to her experience on Sunday evening last, at half-past five.

“I wished most particularly to listen-in to the item known as ‘Any Questions?’ when the Brains Trust broadcasts replies to a variety of inquiries. I had, I may say, been looking forward to it all day long and had warned the General, who greatly dislikes anything of the kind, so that he could be out of the room. And yet what happened?”

“The General wouldn’t go,” said Laura.

Aunt Emma, with better taste, supposed that the programme had been cancelled at the last minute. Mrs. Pledge came in on a lower level altogether with the suggestion that Mrs. Battlegate might have fallen into a nap.

The other things that were said, mostly about food, were completely drowned by the voice of Mrs. Battlegate.

“At half-past five, believe it or not, I sat in the drawing-room—this very room in which we are now—and listened, quietly and calmly listened, to ‘The Children’s Hour’—a programme in which I take little or no interest.”

“Then why did you listen to it?” Laura asked—crudely perhaps, but not unnaturally.

“Therein lies the peculiarity of the human mentality,” said Mrs. Battlegate. “My mind—usually, I believe, of the practical and executive order—had become a temporary blank in so far as my desire to listen to the Brains Trust was concerned.”

Aunt Emma asked whether Mrs. Battlegate meant that she had forgotten about wanting to listen in to the Brains Trust.

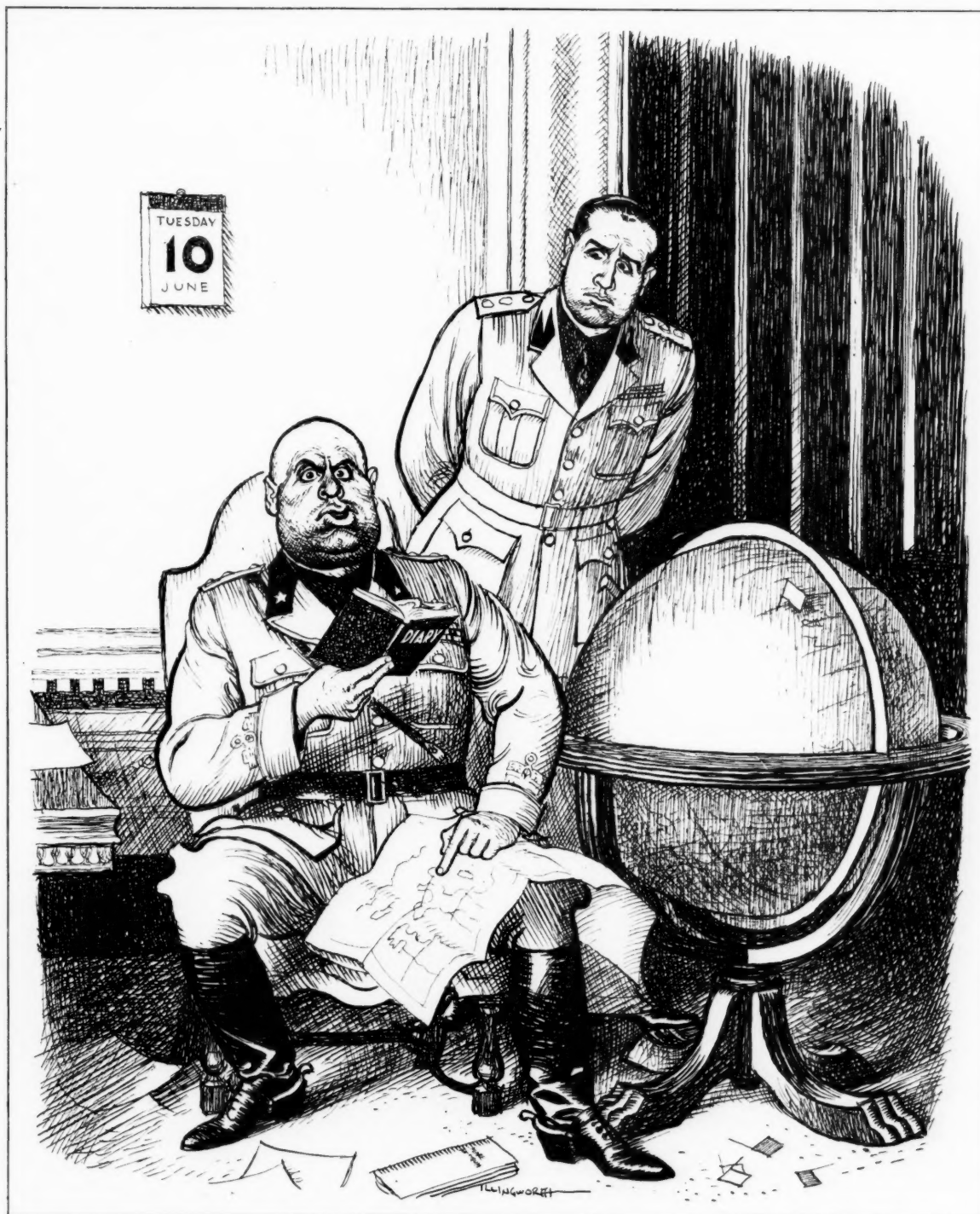
Mrs. Battlegate, looking grave but still interested, bowed her head assentingly.

“The aggravating thing is,” Laura said afterwards, when—after hearing more about the human mentality—we had left “Deehra Dhoon”—“that, for some extraordinary reason, we all seemed to feel that Mrs. Battlegate had done something quite clever and interesting, instead of merely senseless.”

One could not deny that so it was.

Another example, no doubt, of the peculiarity of the human mentality.

E. M. D.



THE GROWTH OF ASPIRATION

"A year ago I demanded Nice, Corsica and Tunisia; now I demand Abyssinia, Libya, Sicily and also a foothold in Italy."

At the Pictures

FOLKESTONE AND HANKEY PARK

"The story of a simple soul"—and there seems somehow to be more soul in MICHAEL REDGRAVE's reading of the part of *Kipps* (Director: CAROL REED) than one might have expected. I always thought of *Kipps* as a somewhat more earthy type—well-meaning, gentle, anxious, diffident, yes; but less spiritually fragile, more knobbly. However, this is nothing against Mr. REDGRAVE's performance, which seems to me excellent in its key. My chief complaint against an enjoyable film is that the *Kipps*-as-a-boy episodes at the beginning are, like nearly all child stuff in films, artificial. There is nothing here that isn't in the book, I admit, though it's telescoped; but it is less obtrusive in the book. This very telescoping means that the high-lights have been chosen and run together, and the effect is too conscious, too emphasized.

Much of the picture is treated as an exploration of Edwardian oddities, some of them (for instance the singers at the bandstand) made a little too odd for the sake of easy laughs. But many of the scenes are admirably managed, notably the meeting of the Folkestone Youth Association (admission free) where *Kipps* and *Pierce* and their young lady friends from the shop experience an earnest lecture by that show-off *Mr. Chester Coote*, and the celebratory scene in the shop basement after *Kipps* has come into his money.

Among the minor players are ARTHUR RISCOE, who gives a gorgeously highly-coloured portrait of *Chitlerlow*; EDWARD RIGBY, first-rate as always in the part of *Buggins*; and PHYLLIS CALVERT, an excellent choice for *Ann Pornick*. DIANA WYNARD is beautiful, kind and intimidating as *Helen Walshingham*, and MAX ADRIAN most efficiently displays the overpowering winsomeness of *Chester Coote*.

You may find a harsher and grimmer but no less effective form of escape from our present preoccupations in *Love on the Dole* (Director: JOHN BAXTER). The mood here of course is totally different: behind this story there is more conscience, more seriousness, even more

gloom. There is comedy, but of a rougher kind: the poor may be funny (we are given to understand) but they aren't quaint . . . It's a pity that here too we get comparatively cheap stuff



J. H. DOWD

[Kipps]

LENGTHS

Kipps MICHAEL REDGRAVE



J. H. D.

[Road to Zanzibar]

AN UNEQUAL CONTEST

"Fearless Frazier" BOB HOPE

introduced for the sake of easy laughs; but not, after all, very much of it, and as a whole the picture is a sound, sincere and moving production, well done and good to look at. (They have done their best to make the going smoother for us: the gloomy rain-washed slums of Hankey Park are softened by sepia photography.)

The villains of the piece are grinding poverty and the means test, and essentially the story is of different ways in which they may be defeated—by luck or design. Young *Harry Hardcastle* wins the unbelievable sum of twenty-two pounds in a "threepenny treble," and takes his girl to Blackpool; the bookmaker's runner displays the rewards of dishonesty; *Mrs. Dorbell* finds life bearable with an occasional "nip" of spirits, and *Mrs. Nattle* with the money gained by illegally selling it; *Mrs. Jike* looks into the future by way of table-rapping and tea-leaves. *Sally Hardcastle* (DEBORAH KERR) tries to help her family with "influence," by becoming the mistress of *Sam Grundy* the bookmaker; only *Larry* (CLIFFORD EVANS), her ill-fated husband, is politically-minded enough to go deeper and attack "the system."

It is all well acted, though the more obviously memorable parts are those of the old women who are used, sometimes rather too obviously, for comic relief: that admirable player MAIRE O'NEILL is *Mrs. Dorbell*, and the others are MARJORIE RHODES, MARIE AULT and IRIS VANDELEUR.

If you are tired of even the pretence of reality and want some uninhibited, unthinking laughter, try *Road to Zanzibar* (Director: VICTOR SCHERTZINGER). This has plainly been made to the same pattern as *Road to Singapore* with the omission of all troublesome etceteras such as the incidental touches of credibility that may have been thought to mar that uproarious work. Once again BING CROSBY and BOB HOPE show themselves to be an excellent team of comedians; their perfect timing makes even ordinary wisecracks a pleasure to listen to, and some of those here are very good. DOROTHY LAMOUR is once more involved, though not in a sarong; and there is also the excellent idea, illustrated herewith, of an immense ape's being baffled by the technique of all-in wrestling. R. M.

Cricket

THE C.S.M. naturally went in first. Not of course that he insisted on it, for he is proud of the reputation of being a thoroughly good fellow "off parade." He just picked up a bat as soon as the stumps were pitched and, calling to Corporal Penny to accompany him, set off for the centre of the field.

When Sympson approached him with a question the C.S.M. laughed gaily.

"You mustn't ask me whom I want to umpire," he said. "We are not on the parade ground now, you know. On the cricket-field we are all equals."

Sympson grinned feebly.

"However," said the C.S.M., "rather than hold up the game I don't mind making a couple of suggestions. Tell Sapper Caswell to umpire at the other end and Sapper Tyson at this end."

The umpires went out, and then the fielding side remembered that they had not elected a captain. They would probably have noticed it before, but to save time the C.S.M. had tossed up with himself for choice of innings.

"No captain?" said the C.S.M., when the dilemma was explained. "Corporal Cousins is the obvious man, as he is senior by two months to Corporal Wild. But please yourselves entirely."

Corporal Cousins began to arrange his field. It did not seem to satisfy the C.S.M.

"Who is going to bowl?" he asked.

"Sapper Minshall, Sir."

"Excellent," said the C.S.M., "he bowls a very good medium-fast ball. But this field won't do. You need a man at deep-square-leg. You've been in the Army long enough to know that I have a habit of skying them to deep-square-leg."

A man was duly moved, and the game might have started if the C.S.M. had not noticed that there was something wrong with the wicket-keeper's pads. Sapper Andrews was acting as wicket-keeper. He had put his name down for a cross-country run, but as the cricket team was a man short the C.S.M. had formed the cross-country runners up alphabetically and detailed him, the first man, for cricket.

"Sapper Andrews," said the C.S.M., absent-mindedly adopting his parade-ground voice, "you have your pads on upside-down." Then, remembering where he was, he added politely, "if you don't mind my mentioning it."

Sapper Andrews, who was thoroughly browned off with the whole business, pointed out respectfully that so far as



"I suppose you haven't got such a thing as a pair of your husband's old coupons, lady?"

he was concerned the pads were as useful one way up as the other. Under the C.S.M.'s supervision, however, he was unpadded and repadded, and took his place behind the wicket.

"Get cracking, men," said the C.S.M., "get cracking."

Minshall picked up the ball, and the umpire gave the C.S.M. "centre." At least he tried to, but the C.S.M. did not take much notice of him, having his own ideas on the subject.

A breathless hush fell on the assembly. Minshall walked back, turned, and then took a short run. The men in the slips leaned forward, the other fieldsmen braced themselves, Corporal Penny at the other end prepared to run. Even the eight sick men who had been detailed by the C.S.M. as "cricket spectators" allowed a gleam of intelligent interest to light up their faces.

The ball was a good one, and appeared to be going straight for the wicket. The C.S.M. endeavoured to block it, there was a dull thud as it hit

his left pad, and then the ball streaked on towards the boundary.

"It was a four bye," said Sapper Sympson.

"It was a four hit, I think," said Sapper Savage.

"L.b.w., if you ask me," said Sapper Field boldly.

None of us envied the umpire. He hesitated and then looked doubtfully at his colleague, who naturally took refuge in a glassy stare.

"Why don't you appeal, man?" snapped the C.S.M. to the opposing captain. "How's that, umpire?"

Still the umpire hesitated.

"It was out, you fool," the C.S.M. said—"out as plain as daylight."

He strode over to the umpire and adjusted that embarrassed man's hand to the "out" position, as he was accustomed to adjust recalcitrant rifles to the correct slope.

Then, carrying his bat at an exquisite short trail, he made his way towards the pavilion, shoulders squared, eyes front, and chin thrust forward.



"Jerry?"
 "No, car."
 "Pretty low for a car."

The Fête

"THERE goes Saul Grumbles," said my hostess. "One of our patriarchs."
 "What a fine old man! And he still works for a living?"

"On odd jobs, yes. He clips hedges. Very badly, but we have to employ him. The village would be upset if we did not. He has had an interesting career, though simple. At five years old he was hoeing turnips for Farmer Hillop's grandfather. Till the age of seventy-nine he was still hoeing turnips—not the same ones, naturally. He retired at eighty, and achieved his life's ambition. After living all his life at No. 1, Darke Cottages, Miry Way, he moved into No. 2, which has a porch and windows that open. The village was much interested, and helped him to move. It was quite an event.

"Speaking of the village reminds me. I should like your advice. As you know, the village Fête takes place in July. Can you suggest a new feature—something inexpensive and patriotic, which would appeal to the village? Last year we had a skipping competition. Unfortunately the evacuees won all the prizes. The year before we had folk-dancing, but the village was not interested.

"An open-air play?—it sounds interesting. The difficulty would be to choose the performers. Let me see. Shakespeare? Oh, no, the village would think we were laughing at them. No. Something mild, with dancing, and a good deal of singing. The village adores singing. Do you know of such a piece?"

"Pierrot Among the Flowers.' It sounds charming. We could make a rustic entertainment of it. With a real farm

wagon and perhaps a chorus of haymakers with rakes. No. I forgot. If we borrow Farmer Subsell's wagon, Farmer Hillop and his relations will be annoyed. Similarly with Farmer Subsell. The haymakers' chorus might stand. Or the Mothers' Union choir could sing a few songs. There is one they are particularly fond of. 'Sweet something faces Something long ago In the something twilight There they come and go.' You should see the village women swaying to it. It is electrifying. No, not electricity. More like gas going out. But what is the plot of Pierrot and the Flowers? Pierrot appears. Who would be Pierrot, I wonder? It will have to be Daphne Mealie. She is always chosen for male parts. Pierrot says that he is going to make garlands for his mother's birthday. What is his mother? A queen? Dear me, I must run through the names of the village women who look like queens. The competition will be frightful. By the by, who was her husband? Oh, a king. I was not sure if she had one. The village would want to know. What does Pierrot do now? Recites verses. Mary recites well—but the village would say I was pushing her forward.

"I am getting quite excited about our play. It sounds so pretty and fanciful. Now a demon is determined to outdo Pierrot. They have a duel, with more singing. The demons will be easy. I can find half a dozen. Now a lovely girl appears. She is the prize they are fighting for? Dear me. Where can I find this lovely girl? The village will be so upset if I choose the wrong one. Choose her from another village? An excellent idea! Althea Ips from Woansome. She is beautiful and stately.

"About dancing. Could we have a dance for the very tinies? Something slow and lingering. Holding hands and toddling round and round. Just to say the babies were in it. The bigger children will expect to do their cup-and-saucer dance. It is very pretty and simple. They march slowly round, singing 'I had a pretty saucer to stand beneath my cup I filled it with some nice new milk to let my kitty sup.' After a few minutes they begin to scamper about singing 'I had a little horsey Black and white and grey Its tail was a long one Always in the way,' tossing their heads and neighing. Visitors always clap this turn. The Rector and I have seen it hundreds of times, and we still find it quite charming . . .

"By the by, are not you taking a part? Never mind. I only wanted to be sure. Now Pierrot. He finds the lovely girl but she is dumb. Althea will do that splendidly. Pierrot has to find a nightingale to teach her to speak. What a lovely little play! If only the weather is fine! Now about the nightingale. How would it do to have the choir-boys whistling behind the rhododendrons? The Rector could talk seriously to them before the performance, and tell them not to keep it up too long.

"The demon is overcome, and Pierrot and the lovely girl are happy. Oh, I forgot. Must we not have some comic relief? We have two comedians in the village—Ted Dashmead and Oliver Oyle. Ted specializes in imitating a woman knitting. No. The village would not care for that now, though he has been doing it for over twenty years. Oliver makes funny faces. Could we have him as a comic constable, who arrests the demon and disguises himself—his face, I mean—each time he appears? Will you try to fit him in? I know he would try to get leave.

"I suppose there is a Grand Finale. Dear, dear, it is going to be an outstanding feature. In the foreground Pierrot, the lovely girl, and the demon—oh, and the queen. At the sides of the stage the schoolchildren, including the evacuees. In the background notable people, the A.R.P. Section, the rural councillors, and the Sanitary Inspector. And God Save the King."



"Oh—and what won the 3.30?"

The World Divided

I DO not see eye to eye with those who group humanity under such headings as Workers and Drones, Rich and Poor, and so on. In my opinion the world is made up of (a) practical men and (b) others. I am one of the others.

It is strange, but although practical men are repugnant to me they also fascinate me. Consider, for example, that Practical Chimney Sweep, H. Cox. I watch him spellbound while he sweeps my chimneys. I even speak to him of my admiration for the amount of tubing he pushes up and the amount of soot he gets down. This exhibition of reluctant hero-worship leaves H. Cox unmoved. All conversation but that of a fellow practician is no more than rhetoric to a practical man.

But suppose that, as he packs up to go, I try to interest H. Cox in my own humble activities, pointing to my desk and saying that that is my little corner where I do my work. Is he fascinated? Is he even interested? Not he. Not H. Cox. He says, "Oh, ah," shoulders my soot, and legs it. He sometimes writes to me afterwards; but does his letter say he is sorry he was so wrapped up in himself when last we met? Not it. It says, "Bot. of H. Cox, 2 chinnies swep, 7/-." And that is all the hero-worship I get out of him.

The explanation, of course, is that although the practical man is useful to me, I am worse than useless to him. If I am good at painting pictures or writing poetry or playing the violoncello—then in the view of the practical man it's a pity I can find nothing better to do. We are poles apart. Workers and drones may rub shoulders in a football crowd, rich and poor may astonish the picture-papers by marrying one another, but for all the chance that fellows like myself have of establishing common ground with practical men—why, we might as well be segregated into separate hemispheres!

And given a moment's consideration, perhaps the idea has something to recommend it. The practical half of the world might guffaw at my half. "Ha, ha!" they would jeer—"just fancy! A whole hemisphere of chaps capable of nothing better than dreaming dreams and seeing visions and exploiting their imaginations. What's going to happen to them, I should like to know, when the first thaw comes and bursts their pipes, eh? Ha, Ha!"

Answer: We should have no pipes; we should do away with pipes; yes, and with alarm-clocks and lawn-mowers and chimneys, and with wireless-sets and electricity and dinner-wagons and curtain-rods and gas-fires, and sliding garage-doors and internal combustion engines and automatic cookers and all the rest of the dreary fallible gadgetry for which one section of humanity alone—the practical men—were responsible in the first place. What dreamer ever dreamed a sliding garage-door (or a 15-inch gun)? What visionary ever visualized a curtain-rod (or a barbed-wire entanglement)? What man of imagination ever imagined an alarm-clock (or a delayed-action bomb)?

No, O Practical Men, we should be very happy in our hemisphere. We should be laughing. And what would you be doing in yours?

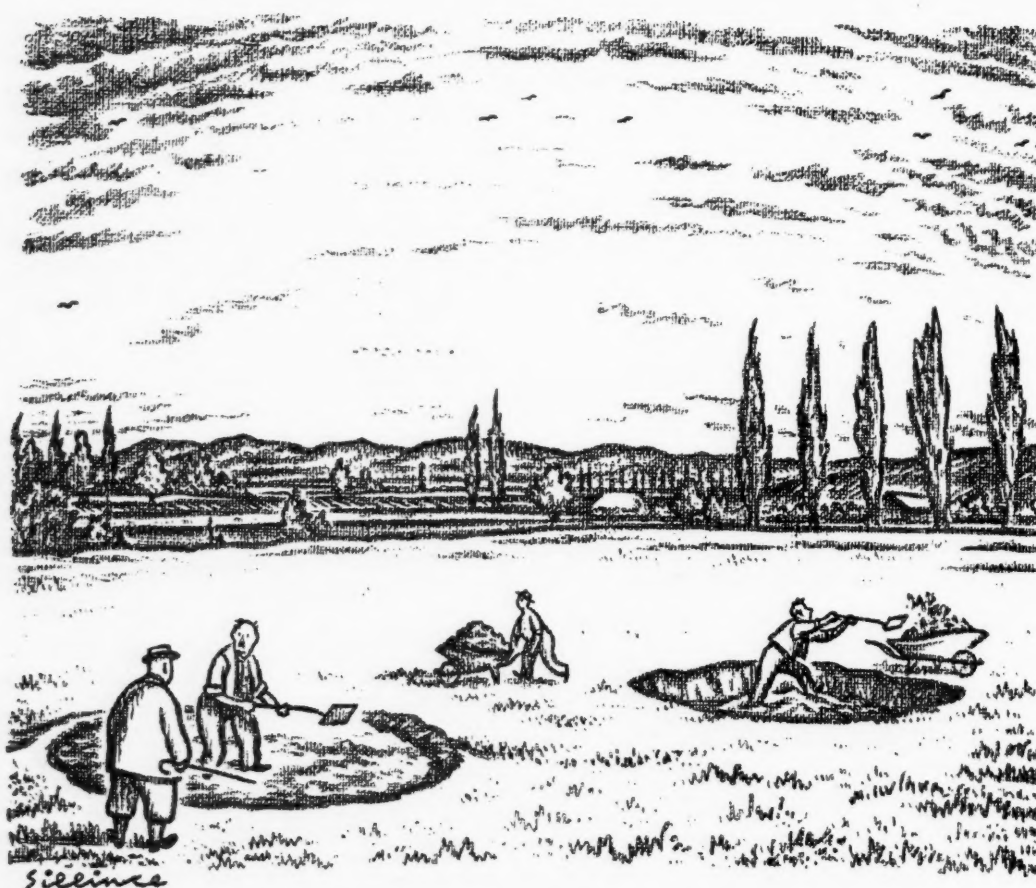
You would be crying, most likely—crying to your neighbours to let you mend their front gates, reinforce their air-raid shelters, paper their bathrooms; and they would be answering angrily that they had in the past not only seen to their own front gates, air-raid shelters and bathrooms, but had made a jolly fat living out of seeing to other people's—those other people who had now taken themselves off with one accord to the other end of the earth.

And there you would be, marooned in your half-world, surrounded by perfect drain-pipes, immaculately-laid linoleum, flawless plumbing, speckless chimneys—and by thousands and thousands of workless, hopeless, unimaginative practical men. Soon you would start cabling us to come back, to hurry home and settle down in our houses again, bunging up the drains, smashing the locks, pulling the handles off the doors, setting the chimneys on fire.

But we, many blessed miles away, quite unable to drive a nail in straight (or manufacture so much as a bow-and-arrow) but managing very well nevertheless—we would laugh quietly together, and refuse to be drawn. You would begin to get ugly (never very difficult for you), to use threats, to demand your just dues. Who deserved the credit, you would wail, for all the wonders of the twentieth century—for the washing-up machines, the ships, the trains, the motor-cars (the tanks, the submarines)? What would have become of civilization, you would scream, if matters had been left to the dreamers, the visionaries, the men of imagination? (Who would have turned the polished torpedo, rounded the smooth bomb?) What sort of a success, you would shriek, would we have made of things, without the help of the practical men?

Ah, and how we should be tempted to cable back, simply, "Come and see!" And how nobly we should resist the temptation—just in case you did!





"We're a-filling in the bomb-'ole, Sir—like you said."

Scenes of Childhood

ROAMING anxiously around
Through the once familiar scene,
Things were not, the old man found,
What they had been.

Once the air was half asleep,
Heavy with narcotic rooks,
Lowing herds and bleating sheep
And easy brooks;
Now, with huge and jostling planes
Deafening his ancient ears,
Nature's more seductive strains
He hardly hears.

Where he walked some leafy way
While the cool air fanned his brows,
Meeting, possibly, a stray
Cart or some cows,
Rushing lorries, clanging tanks,
Keep his aged nerves on edge
As he dives on lightning shanks
Into the hedge.

"Twas of yore his wont to lie
Deeply in a little wood,
Gazing upward at the sky
And feeling good;
Vainly there his steps are drawn
But to find the friendly copse
Gone for ever, axed and sawn
For making props.

And, as tow'rds his home he goes,
E'en the quiet village street
Rings with barking N.C.O.s
And soldiers' feet.
Yet he lingers at the door
Musing on a troubled land;
Wishes he were young once more
To lend a hand:

Knows that that can never be;
Sadly wags a thoughtful head;
Takes resignedly his tea
And goes to bed.

DUM-DUM.



THE PLEDGE

"Never shall the soil of our Colonial Empire be sullied by the foot of any foreign invader!"



“A THOUSAND THANKS”

“A THOUSAND thanks, the men and myself are most grateful to you. There are still bitter East winds blowing in the bleak places where the guns are, and the woollies are much appreciated.”

Letters of appreciation reach us from many directions, expressing the gratitude of the Fighting Forces, of the bombed and homeless, of the hospitals and many others who benefit by gifts from the PUNCH HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND. These gifts are only made possible by your generosity and contributions. Please help us to help those on whose courage and unceasing efforts so much of our liberty depends.

If you have helped us with contributions already will you please help again? If this is your first introduction to the Fund will you please become a subscriber? Donations will be gratefully acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.



"I'm sorry to discourage you, Henry, but surely you realize that these things have completely lost their publicity value?"

The Dupe

THE enthusiasts leaned heavily on the topmost bar of the wooden gate and stared broodingly at the scarecrow in Foley's young wheat; then, acting by common consent, they spat.

For, instead of the battered head-gear favoured by all normal scarecrows, this one was crowned by a cap of the unmistakable shape worn by the jockey, whether professional or amateur; the colour best described as "off white." And since they had leaned there the evening before, someone had added a whip to the figure's equipment—not a riding-crop, as would have been far more in keeping with the cap, but a stout stick with a long and fluttering lash such as cattle-drovers use; and, what was still more infuriating to the sorely-tried smokers of Eire just now, a clay pipe.

"That's the very identical cap Jamesy Foley would have wore," Heels Moran said, and swayed backwards in the way that has got him his nickname, "but I dunno rightly who all is

implicated in the whip an' the pipe," and he sighed deeply. "When the Black an' Tans was doin' their depredations here itself," he said, "we had the races the same as ever, an' the tobacco wasn't riz on us"; and he spat again.

Nothing more devastating has ever happened to the people of that district—known officially as Raheenduff, but to many of its natives as "up agen the Pint to Pint"—than this year's abandoning of an annual fixture to which they look forward for three hundred and sixty-three days. The actual date of the races is one of the remaining two, and the day following is given up to rueful retrospection rather than to optimistic anticipation. "He had the whole appearance of bein' a bred horse," one enthusiast has said of a good-looking favourite of last spring, who, undisturbed by the frantic yells of his supporters, lingered at the starting-point and watched his opponents almost out of sight before taking his stricken rider by surprise in a mad dash across a forbidden field

outside the course, at the end of which he gaily though ineffectively took the lead.

"Still an' all," the speaker went on, "he was a class of a herydithery blagyard, for the jock told me he was blood brother to the chestnut that went around here that time before the very same as if he was playin' a harp; he says the whole entire issue is weak in the head, bad cess to them!"

The fact of being neutral or belligerent had nothing to do with the cancelling of Raheenduff's Point to Point races. It was due to the present scourge of foot-and-mouth disease in Eire. But why the yet immune Raheenduff should have to suffer from the so-called "litigations" placed upon affected areas by the Government was a subject that called for a vast amount of discussing. "You wouldn't mind if so be anny of our cows had the laste sensation of a dhribble," Heels said rather contradictorily, for of course he would have minded—very much indeed—"but their footses an' their



"A Cairo spokesman stated . . ."

pusses is in the best of thrig, thank God, an' there was no occasion to meddle wid the Pint to Pint." He paused. "There's nothin' in the illimitable earth could have bet the Docthor's lepper," he went on, and he did not refer to any refraining from the corporal punishment of a sufferer from a horrible Eastern disease, but only to Dr. Grace's hunter, of whose soaring leaps the yardman has said, "His whole hobby is to rise up into the very shky when he meets wid anny class of a ditch or a wall. Look'd the back wall of the Ball Alley would be nothin' to

him if he wanted to cross it." But even in a community noted for "redundancy of speech" this claim was recognized as being somewhat exaggerated.

The bitterness caused by the scarecrow's cap had been fading a bit when it was all stirred up by the sight of the whip, whose fluttering lash was much more reminiscent of now idle drovers than of any horse-race—cross-country or flat.

"When I think back to the hostin's of people comin' down that road to the Pint to Pint," Heels said and more

bitterly than ever, "an' the money that'd be lashed around Raheenduff on the head of them, I do be in a horridable way. An' there was a time when the Quality was altogether more fashionable than they are now in their whole set-out; I seen the day when there was top-hats all over this coorse, an' ladies thrailin' chiffons where a pair of cord-uroy trousers is what they favour now, God help them, an' terrifyin' red claws."

There was silence for a while and with the sudden passing of the little breeze even the whip-lash ceased to wave, while the off-white cap seemed to sink still lower towards the broken clay pipe.

The enthusiasts looked at the scarecrow with cold dislike. "He has a jock's cap an' there's no Pint to Pint," Heels Moran said—"an' a long lash, but no cattle must move out of where they are; an' he has a pipe, wid the tobaccy gone up fourpence in the ounce." His voice rose. "He's nothin' at all," he shouted, "but a jeerin' ould jupe." D. M. L.

Signaller's Serenade

ACK DON ORANGE ROBERT
EDWARD you,
Of YORKER ORANGE UNCLE must
I think,
NUTS ORANGE MONKEY ACK NUTS ever
loved
As INK.

Of WILLIAM ORANGE MONKEY EDWARD
NUTS,
PIP ROBERT EDWARD TOC TOC YORKER
dear,
My little LONDON ACK DON YORKER you
Must BEER.

"My SUGAR WILLIAM EDWARD EDWARD
TOC!"
TOC HARRY UNCLE SUGAR shall I sing,
"INK FREDDIE you would WILLIAM
EDWARD DON,
O KING."

DON INK VIC INK NUTS EDWARD
SUGAR TOC!
One JOHNNIE ORANGE YORKER still I
lack—
MONKEY ACK ROBERT ROBERT YORKER
me.
ACK - - - - - ACK.

A Basis of Agreement

"He is somewhat faddish about his food.
He cannot, for example, eat eggs."
Daily Herald.

At the Play in the North

"THE NUTMEG TREE"
(GRAND, BLACKPOOL)

"FIRST nights" now are rare and even rural occasions. Not that Blackpool on Whit Monday is a solitude. The play-goer upon that shore is unlikely to wander lonely as a cloud: but he will, among the "joy in widest commonalty spread," discover what is left of the drama and even light upon that unexpected pleasure, a new play. Last week, for example, there was *The Nutmeg Tree*, by Miss MARGERY SHARP. This was given for the first time, prior to a little tour of the North and of Scotland which precedes the London showing.

It is a play about a lady with a past, and it is fairly common experience that ladies with a past make plays with a future. It is, in this case, an innocent past, a mere gambol on the foothills of indiscretion, and the lady is an entirely charming person. How could that be otherwise when Miss YVONNE ARNAUD plays the part? Miss ARNAUD, with her perfect artistry in the display of blameless mischief, holds together triumphantly a story which combines those elements of absurdity and tenderness not always easy to blend.

Her part is that of a lady who appears to have failed in everything but the business of being a perfect dear. Her marriage was a failure, her stage career has been a humble one, and her efforts to cope with the fiscal and the housing problems have landed her with no larger tenement than what might be called a "combined bathroom." The bailiffs are battering even upon that poor door. But the lady has a daughter who is spending a long vacation among the county folk in County Down. So Madame, having realized her last assets, makes the passage to Ulster and, needless to say, finds more opportunity on board the boat to enlarge her entanglements.

The new cause of trouble is a bounder in more senses than one, a prince of acrobats leading his troupe of trapeze-boys to a conquest of Ireland. Miss SHARP has freshened up an elderly story by the introduction of this unusual interloper. For instead of being a desperate young dog he turns out to be mean, prim, and priggish, and is at last most deservedly turned down by the lady in favour of a titled diplomat with a military past and a Foreign Office present. Meanwhile two engaging Acts have shown us the kind of Ulster society in which Miss HELEN HAYE is superbly

domestic, while Miss MAIRE O'NEILL speaks with all her authority as a Juno of the pantry.

Here is a nice flow of social comedy in which Miss ARNAUD goes with infectious relish from one dilemma to another, there to be most efficiently baited by Miss CARLA LEHMANN, Miss UNA VENNING and Mr. ROBERT ANDREWS, and thence to be rescued by Mr. FREDERICK LEISTER with the finest tincture of War Office, Foreign Office, and County Down charm. Add a First Act in which the humours of a rough crossing are added to those of acrobats *en voyage* and what more can anybody ask? Certainly Blackpool required no more for its satisfaction. Nor, one fancies, will Caledonia remain stern and wild when Miss ARNAUD goes across the Border with *The Nutmeg Tree*. I. B.

"KING JOHN" (KENDAL)

SHAKESPEARE'S Early Baronial style is not as popular as it used to be. Modern actors have preferred realism to rhetoric and the "histories" invite the grand declamatory manner. However, since it is absurd to select a half-dozen of the Shakespearean favourites and revive them without cease, the Old Vic Company has done well to select *King John* from the nowadays rejected pieces (it was much used as a vehicle for the high and mighty histrionics admired by our ancestors) and to see what can be done with it. The team is now on a C.E.M.A. tour, and is also making a north-westerly passage to Scotland. London will be visited in July, if all goes well.

And well it should go. The play is certainly an odd one, written when the young SHAKESPEARE was still rather remembering MARLOWE than discovering his own full powers as a dramatist.

It is full of sound and fury, signifying quite a lot. It has, in *Faulconbridge*, one of the happiest pictures of a lusty, humorous, combatant Englishman, and it supplies him with some well-known quotations about the four corners of the world, etc., with which to inspirit a war-time audience.

The ethics and psychology of war repeat themselves. The English and French kings, in their dealing with Angiers, remind one sadly and strangely of HITLER and STALIN discussing the fate of a buffer state. Thus *King John* offers something for political reflection as well as much for ordinary theatrical enjoyment. This travelling production cannot be lavishly scenic, but it can be, and is, very colourful and well beflagged. Mr. FREDERICK CROOKE has splashed the paint-pots over the barons and their banners to fine effect, and Mr. ERNEST MILTON'S *King John* is a brilliant centre-piece, an orange-tawny scamp with a soul of pitch. The French in blue, the British in red, Dame SYBIL THORNDIKE in full voice and grief as a queen among tragedy queens, Mr. LEWIS CASSON as a very reverend and ancient ecclesiastic, and Miss ESMÉ CHURCH as a queen who is also "a card"—here is history with plenty of grease-paint and a copious flow of rhetoric and tears. It will surprise some to discover that SHAKESPEARE makes no mention of Magna Carta, without whose parchment *King John* seems unthinkable to us now. There seem to have been gaps in the curriculum at Stratford Grammar School. But, whatever the Bard's young ignorance of Runnymede and All That, his comprehension of how to make the English language smoke and thunder and flame across the stage was absolute. I. B.

Better Late Than Never

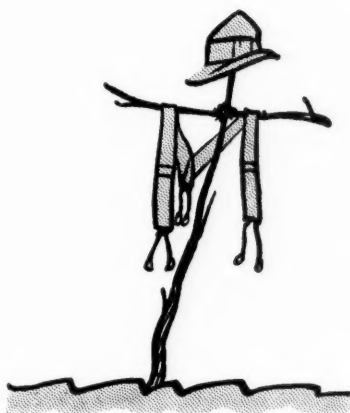
"South secures the contract, say, in spades, after West has bid clubs. East more or less expects West to lead clubs, but West for some reason elects to lead a heart. West should promptly don his thinking-cap and try to discover some logical reason for this lead."

Bridge Article in Manchester Paper.

"NO WHISKY
NO BRANDY
NO RUM
NO BEER TILL TUESDAY
WE HAVE A STIRRUP-PUMP."

Notice on the door of an off-license house
in Gloucestershire.

Keep it.





"Do you think they'll use gas?"

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Culture under Fire

German Odyssey (CAPE, 10/6) is an extremely interesting book, the autobiography—modest, straightforward and poignant—of a German-Jewish dramatist and journalist now a soldier in the Pioneer Corps. How Herr OTTO ZAREK managed to wrest an intellectual education and career out of a Germany increasingly averse to intelligence, and how in the course of them he got to know and appreciate most of the literary and artistic stars in his firmament, is the courageous prelude to his exile in Austria, Hungary and England. Underneath, however, a case exists, involuntarily but circumstantially pleaded, for HITLER, the hysterical cad whose foot the author once grazed in the swing-door of a Munich restaurant. Herr ZAREK fails to perceive that the post-war intellectualism he describes badly needed an antidote, and that the Berlin Jews who financed the kind of plays that the Nazis were beating up in 1922 had only themselves to thank if their "humanism" was not popular. "If there were any other hope, no one would be a Nazi," a student told the exile when he arrived in Vienna. Intellectuals who betray the morality of the ordinary decent man are obviously accelerating the submission of the ordinary decent man to the gangster.

Poet's Gold

The poet's mind has, one feels, its disabilities. It can cherish the pattern of an ideal world. It can accumulate a horde of untarnished memories and put them into currency when and how it will. But it renders its possessor acutely sensitive to the desecration that goes on around him—the loveliness that is always being filched in the name of some dirty little utility or other; and he is tempted to envy the mystic who, holding everything on lease, as it were, from the eternal, has nothing immediately to lose. When Mr. LAURENCE BINYON portrays, among the ruins of a Cambodian city, the ecstasy of a naked hermit, he stresses this contrast—as does, indeed, many another number of *The North Star and Other Poems* (MACMILLAN, 4/6). The least happily inspired of this new series is the choral poem on SHELLEY'S obsequies—at least for those who remember how their grisly reality sickened even the hard-boiled BYRON. But this apart—and as allegory it is decorative enough—what a delightful assemblage! Here are "Mediterranean Verses," with a native echo of MARVELL and TENNYSON, and a patriot's love-lyrics, an exquisite handful, to the England of juniper-strewn downs and "nested hamlets."

Musical Exploration

During the past twenty years music has been going through a time of crisis. In their reaction against their predecessors and feverish search for new expression, composers rejected everything belonging to the past. Tonality was discarded, and polytonality or atonality substituted; the tone was slain and quartered, discord and concord changed places, and inspiration was forgotten in the pursuit of the latest theory. Mr. BASIL MAINE discusses all this, and the signs he discerns of the dawn of a new order, in an interesting and informative book, *New Paths in Music* (NELSON, 2/6). Not that he is always informative, for he occasionally leads the seeker after enlightenment up the garden path only to reward him with a truism—as, for instance, when, discussing the symphonies of WILLIAM WALTON and VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, he emphasizes the "essentially personal problem" they represent to these composers. All creative art is the personal problem of its creator before it becomes that of the public and the critics. Mr. MAINE writes also of the work of many other European and American composers, and of opera, which will, he



"I got my badge for incendiary bombs all right, but I didn't do so well with H.E.s."

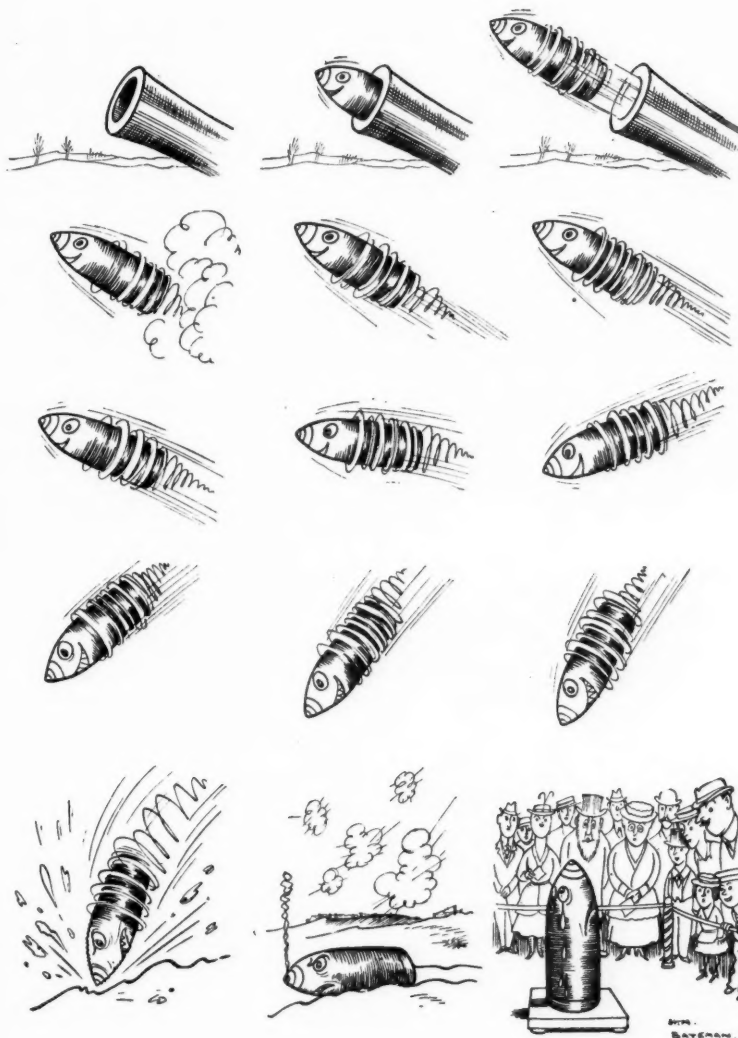
thinks, in future be "more rational, less sublime." This is a bleak prospect. If the sublime and the ridiculous in opera go hand-in-hand, one feels it is better to have both than neither. Its freshness of style and outlook, and the author's enthusiasm for his subject, make this book a pleasure to read.

Wordy Warfare

In *One Man's Year* (GOLLANCZ, 9/-) Mr. BERNARD NEWMAN tells of some of the five hundred and two lectures he gave, beginning in January 1940 when he was sent to France in an old bomber (his first flight and nearly his last) to talk to the troops. While there he visited the Maginot Line, collaborated with E.N.S.A., and marvelled at French carelessness and the laconic ways of the English. "Very good, Sir. It's your funeral. Your platform is made of a case of live bombs," was the answer of a sergeant when told to let five hundred and fifty men smoke through a lecture. In England, Mr. NEWMAN lectured to women and schoolboys as well as to other people. He does his best to scotch the rumour-monger, and is more heartening than many about the Ministry of Information, by whom he was told to "beat Hitler in his own way." The way was with words—a million of them in one year; yet there is no suspicion of padding in this crowded book. It should be in every Mess (soldiers' as well as officers'), in every school (girls' as well as boys'), and in every household as well.

Shooting Star

If a book can give readers more to bite off than they can chew, then surely *The Star Called Wormwood* (GOLLANCZ, 8/-), by Mr. MORCHARD BISHOP, provides those tough mouthfuls. He begins with a sort of apology for writing a book about the imbecility of war at a time when war is raging. He adds a Dedication Address to "All Christian Kings, Princes and Governors," wishing them "good hunting—whoever's the fox." He begins the story in 1839, when one stable-boy was shot by another. The former's unconscious body stays in Devon while his astral one discovers a green meadow *plus* WILLIAM BLAKE and SAMUEL COLERIDGE. In company with COLERIDGE (both dressed in greasy blue overalls) he floats into the world of 2839 where, "incorporated in a buhl side-table," he attends a Cabinet Meeting. Later he meets "Mitler." He also attends a sort of dress rehearsal of the Day of Judgment. A list of the players (including SHAKESPEARE, NAPOLEON, MARX, trees, pebbles, animals, etc.) would take up all this review. The book is brilliant



THE DUD

H. M. Bateman, June 12th, 1918

in places, contains much thought, a sort of "mad logic," wit, schoolboy humour, words that rude little boys write on walls, and descriptions of the Deity which will offend many. In short, Mr. BISHOP seems to have hitched his wagon to a star, but the wagon can't make the pace.

Kai Lung Relates the Story of Kwey Chao and the Grateful Song Bird.

KWEY CHAO was the only blossom in the depleted Line of Mong Ho, a maritime person of the Lower Hiang Delta, who was sometimes described in official edicts as "our faithful and highly-esteemed salt-tax collector and the trusty upholder of water-way law and custom in the turbulent Hiang region," and at other times as "that earth-polluting thug and river-contaminating two-and-a-half cash pirate, Mong"—this according to whether the one concerned had transmitted to those in office a reasonable proportion of the exaction he had levied or whether he had for a period overlooked the desirability of so doing.

It had been a matter of unutterable—but nevertheless very fluently-expressed—regret to Mong Ho that Kwey Chao had proved to be of the sort she was, whereas the painstaking and frequently hard-pressed tax-gatherer had expended a considerable weight of silver taels in persuading the various Omens and responsible Forces involved to provide him with a he-child who should in due course lend a strenuous arm to the oft-time thankless task of urging the less formidable types of river craft to recognize both the disloyalty and the hopelessness of resisting taxation.

Positioned thus and thus it need occasion no surprise that Mong Ho resolutely took no interest whatever in the outcome of his parental ambition, so that Kwey Chao, bereft

graceful unconcern among the glades of the neighbouring forest—especially by the close-sighted. Her unbound feet, though admittedly grotesque to the superficial, enabled her to maintain an attractive and defiant poise in the most hazardous situations, while her symmetrically-shaped hands seemed to be naturally formed more for the purpose of grasping required things than that of spreading out in helpless and beseeching attitudes. From these circumstances it was inevitable that when a marriageable age was reached Mong Ho's she-child was—in the deplorable apophthegm of the uncouth about the Hiang Delta—generally referred to as being "not every pig-fancier's outlay."

Driven by these converging lines of fate to seek entertainment wholly through her own resources, Kwey Chao had frequented the forest depths and the far-reaching stretches of the Delta waters from the time of her milk-days onwards, there penetrating into unknown parts and associating on terms of unusual mutual trust and confidence with many furtive and untamed creatures.

It is only necessary here to speak of the decisive influence of Yellow Crest, the unsurpassed songster of the lonely tracts, who now comes into the recital.

It was during one of her solitary progressions into the further wastes that, following the indication of a plaintive cry, Kwey Chao resolutely forced her way through the tangled prickly thorn-shrub growth to find a small bird of inconspicuous hue (excluding the single characteristic from which it took its name) confined to the spot by a broken wing and succumbing from the lack of water. To supply the latter need was Kwey Chao's first thought, and thereafter she applied herself to the task of repairing the fractured limb with unswerving patience and perseverance. No healing salve was too costly or remote to be beyond her fixed resolve, nor did she omit to tread the most distant paths in order to engage the services of devout recluses or those capable of bringing favourable influences to bear upon any existing contingency. Such devotion could not escape celestial recognition, and the day was not far distant when Yellow Crest was able to soar to the extreme point of discernible vision and from that height to express its unbounded gratitude in an—so to speak—ample outflow of spontaneous emotion.

"Could this person acquire but half the joyousness your discriminatory senses evidently experience," was wrested from Kwey Chao's admiring throat, "such melodious incoherence on her part would result that those who hitherto have regarded the one who is speaking as an entirely negligible sound would thereafter pay marked attention to her most trivial utterance."

Inspired by this desirable but excessively improbable attainment Kwey Chao, with no set purpose at the time, formed her far from unattractive lips into a responsive shape and sent upwards an answering note of gladness. To her gratified surprise she found that the range and capacity of her voice were not markedly unequal to the task; whereupon she continued in a like strain, and with an occasional lapse from strict precision succeeded in repeating the whole of the melody with a creditable display of appropriate feeling.

Under the stress of the concentrated emotion involved, Kwey Chao had resolutely closed her eyes during the latter part of the exertion; when she again looked out she discovered that Yellow Crest had taken up a convenient



"That earth-polluting thug and river-contaminating two-and-a-half cash pirate, Mong."

of the usual accomplishments of those of her own sort, grew up in a wholly illogical manner. In place of the carefully gummed tresses and studiously restrained gait of those who should have been her natural associates, Kwey Chao's voluminous hair streamed unconfined until it was frequently mistaken for a flock of migratory ravens as she sped with

position on an adjacent branch, where he had been giving an attentive consideration to her efforts, for he now brought the extremities of his wings several times together with the measured approval of one who wishes to encourage a promising display even though he cannot commend the performance in every minute detail.

From that time onwards the high-principled bird devoted itself wholly to requiting the debt of gratitude which it considered was due to Kwey Chao by lifting her step upon step to an equality of melody with its own supreme achievement. At the outset, under the exacting tutelage of so precise a teacher, the one most concerned was not disposed to raise paeans of gladness that Yellow Crest's sense of duty impelled him to this exalted standard, but presently she fell under the spell of the inspired songster's zeal and strove, no less than he urged, towards an ideal perfection. With the earliest gong-stroke of the day, therefore, when his first clear-cut jade-like notes announced the dawn, Kwey Chao gladly left her scanty pallet and together they sought an unfrequented glade where the gross-minded Mong Ho could not intrude and defile the innocent scene with offensive remarks, ill-bred signs and a derisive absence of gravity. At first Yellow Crest insisted, by the inoffensive persuasion of repeated example, that Kwey Chao should perfect herself in the manipulation of single notes, and not until satisfied that she had complete control of these, as one might say, throat-relaxing exercises would he countenance a more ambitious onslaught. That achieved, however, he let it be understood, by a complicated flourish of his own vocal range, that she might attempt some of the more elementary flights of song, and, placing himself opposite on an overhanging bough, he held himself firmly on one self-reliant claw and, raising the other, suitably indicated by a variety of appropriate beats the pattern that the melody should follow. . . . It was a green-leaf day for both when Yellow Crest announced, through the harmonious medium of perfect understanding that was now maintained between them, that Kwey Chao had nothing more to learn or he to teach, and indicated that she should, in unison with himself, essay a rendering of his most admired and complicated rhapsody—that now generally referred to as "The Yellow Crest's Invocation to the as yet Unrisen Great Luminary of the Firmament."

At about this time the Mandarin Chan Hing Pung, a functionary as far-seeing as he was just, who exercised supreme authority over the Lower Hiang Delta, realized that, immersed in the multitudinous and exacting affairs of State, he had hitherto overlooked the necessity of providing an adequate posterity who should preserve his imperishable Line intact. He therefore summoned the inscriber of his spoken word and mechanized transcriber of doubtful outlines to his side and charged him with a mission.

"You, Ti-ping," he explained, with the courteous forbearance that he rarely failed to extend even to a vassal, "have in the past carried out a diversity of commands with no more than the normal lack of intelligence observable in the average inscriber of our uttered phrases."

"The gracious magnanimity of your excessively high Eminence's undeserved regard is a never-failing source of nourishment to the tap-root of this inept one's fading self-esteem," protested the supple Ti-ping, hastening to assemble the four essentials of his calling. "Proceed to impose your ever-welcome task, Benign, and do not hesitate to lay on the obligations with a heaped-up trowel."

"This mission, however, impresses a greater strain upon a notoriously ill-nurtured brain than anything with which it has hitherto been called to grapple," continued the urbane dispenser of justice, closing his expressive eyes in order to indicate that he had heard no syllable of Ti-ping's tactless

interruption. "For a lengthy period now the various printed leaves of our cultured land have been devoting their priceless space to such epoch-stirring topics as, 'Is Monogamy a Fiasco?' 'Do Secondary Wives make the Best Mothers?' and the like. Your concern during the next moon, therefore, Ti-ping, will be to pay a semi-official but confidential visit to the courts of so many other mandarins of the province as you can reasonably find an excuse for distressing—both those equal but above and those equal but below to our own insignia and button—and discover, by means of ingratiatory scandal, sympathetic condolences, personal disclosures, and as many other devices as your naturally prurient mind can embellish, why in each particular case matrimony has been synonymous with acute mental



"Indicated by a variety of beats . . . the melody."

depression. On your return we shall tabulate and card-index the results, and this person, warned diagrammatically of what to avoid, can then go forward with the certainty of a felicitous union."

"It is as near as achieved, Revered," was Ti-ping's boastful assurance as he set forth, "and the processional drums of your acclaimed wedding march may almost be heard approaching."

It was, however, with a less vainglorious front that the specious taker-down of spoken words accounted for what had been accomplished on his return, and when the one whose minion he was spoke of the coloured charts that were to display both cause and effect, Ti-ping replied with an effete gesture indicating complete absence of recollection.

"That is neither is nor was, however, Esteemed," ran his facile excuse, "since everything that tends to this affair can be contained within a hollow nail-sheath. . . . All your superficial-witted contemporaries have been swayed by the prepossessing exterior of those with whom they exchanged the silk-bound bond of promise, regardless of whether any possessed the more abiding qualities that could contribute to their lasting entertainment. The lamentable consequence is that the inner chambers of the yamens of this intellectually stagnant province are dominated by an assemblage of mentally-deficient by-gones who have found no incentive to preserve the only allurements they ever had nor possessed

the ability to develop any other. The obvious expedient in your own specific case, great Excellence—if one so negligible as the mere taker-down of your melodious sentences should be permitted to form an opinion—would seem to point towards testing the nature of the contents in advance rather than accepting as an actual fact the picture of the maiden on the label."

"The richly convoluted trend of our flowery and romantic tongue is capable of such a profundity of variation, Ti-ping, that with so accomplished a master of terminological inexactitude as the one to whom this simple-witted person is now speaking it is often a matter of extreme difficulty to



"Pausing here and there before a likely entrant"

arrive at any rational conclusion," observed the liberal-minded administrator concisely. "What you appear to be endeavouring to express, however, would seem to contain some definite germ of a concrete suggestion. If, therefore..."

"Pre-eminence," interposed Ti-ping with his usual lack of becoming deference, "this matter is as precise as the four sides of a parallelogram and its outcome no less rigid. Thus and thus let it be ordained..."

Unprecedented was the emotion engendered throughout the Hiang Delta when it was made known that their venerated chief magistrate was about to take a lesser one and—herein lay the zest—not gracefulness of outline or pulchritudinous charm were of any account, but only some quality that held out the promise of future and continuous entertainment. On an indicated date all of marriageable age who would be instructed to assemble for the trial and submit their powers to please, none save those sprung from the unclean castes being excluded. To a certain extent the result would be by popular acclaim, but the discriminating mandarin reserved to himself both the casting votes (whatever number the difference entailed) and the right of veto.

Had Mong Ho been cast in a less repellent mould it is not unimaginable that one of Kwey Chao's self-reliant build would have seen no inducement to compose an ode

upon the opportunity provided by this occasion; but the insalubrious filibuster had of late acquired an unpleasant habit of spitting aggressively at intruding flies while he partook of wine, and this proved the last grain of rice in the measure of Kwey Chao's over-burdened tolerance.

"To whatever lapses from strict propriety the exalted mandarin may be prone, it is remote in the extreme that two personages, so diverse in every social attribute, should have this deplorable trait in common," was the conclusion of her scruples. She therefore signified her definite intention to undergo the test, "For," ran the sequence of her thoughts, "surely the ability to produce harmonious noises to an unparalleled extent, and in all probability to be able to continue the accomplishment until we both are senile, would constitute as tangible an asset as to pluck the strings of a zither without discord, depict actual or imagined scenes by the use of coloured earths, deceive the sense of vision through the instrumentality of pasteboard cards, revolve in a continuity of graceful attitudes, carve wood or stone until it assumed some remote affinity to a distorted human being, or any of the other efforts of those who up to now are spoken of as the probable emergers."

In this broad-minded vein Kwey Chao referred to the activities of the lottery-ticket venders who had already established their stalls even in remote settlements of the Delta, for the event was to be the occasion of a general cessation of work of every kind, and the chances of those who had responded to the call were discussed far and wide by eager partisans who had, in extreme cases, pledged their Tablets in order to purchase the utmost limit of tickets. The equivalents ranged from 3 reputed taels 75 unbroken cash in the case of Liu-san, who was credibly declared to know the "Book of Gravity-removing Instances and Waist-band Disrupter's Let-me-tell-you" off by her inside, down to 25 unspecified cash for a complete ticket on the chances of the remote outsider Kwey Chao, of whose attainments the most ingratiatory possessor of a certainty had never heard a shadowy whisper; and even at that temptingly speculative price there had not emerged a single taker. Meanwhile, Kwey Chao redoubled the effort to improve her highest notes, while she did not fail—by the means that their mutual affection had evolved—to impress on Yellow Crest an understanding of the gravity of the occasion.

It might appear irrational at this point, in view of her unassuming charm and position as chief she-character of the narrative, to introduce an element of doubt, but let it be recalled that an assembly of astute result-forecasters, on whose prescience hung their source of life, had esteemed her chances of success as approximately fifteen thousand to one against, and at that had found none to gainsay their wisdom.

Something of this mood assailed Kwey Chao as she entered the space of display on the day of trial and grasped the magnitude of the task before her.

Two score, three hand-counts, and four competitors, representing every branch of demonstrable art, from producing garments by means of coloured threads controlled on skewers, to gyrating on an extended toe while an ordinary person might count a hundred, were assembling there. To each was allotted a suitable tent wherein to arrange her "turn" and a convenient platform whereon in due course to display it.

"What can a mere voice—however refined—avail against so much turmoil?" was wrung from her understanding. "This calls for more forcible methods."

Up to that point it had been Kwey Chao's dignified purpose to confine her efforts to the pure rendering of a few simple ballads, such as firesides inspire, but she now tore down the inscribed placard announcing her aim and

substituted for it one set out in deeper and more lurid colours. On this she described her qualifications as follows:

KWEY CHAO

(Last of the Line of She-pirates)

Animal, Fish, Bird and Insect Impersonator

In her notable and invariably cheerfully received production
entitled

A DAY IN THE DEPTHS OF OUR DELTA

or

MAROONED IN THE MOSQUITO MARSHES

Introducing for the first time in the Annals of Dynastic History a faithful rendering of the Yellow Crest's Invocation to the as yet Unrisen Great Luminary of the Firmament (The Thumb-mark of her Melody).

A certain amount of obloquy has been laid at Kwey Chao's door on account of this move, some contending that it gave her an unfair advantage. This arose from a circumstance that could not have been foreseen and as a result of the far-reaching popular response to the occasion. It had been Ti-ping's design that every candidate should be seen or heard in turn, but when the conscientious mandarin himself realized to what limits of his after-rice repose this would extend he declared that so gross an expenditure of public time was not to be endured; instead, all must display their powers at once while he in person would be carried in his state chair along the line of platforms, pausing here and there before a likely entrant and—as he somewhat familiarly expressed it—in the end encountering no difficulty about putting a distinguishing mark upon the final emerger.

This undoubtedly brought a new element of skill to bear on Kwey Chao's fortunes, for whenever a prominent rival reached a culminating stage Kwey Chao contrived to reach that point whereat one of the larger habitants of the wild uttered a loud and capably-sustained challenge. Added to this, the diversity of her range enabled her, without violating any of the stringent canons of the classical stage, to speak prosaically, to sing in an ordinary way, to make throat-noises bereft of actual words or to propel wind through the lips and teeth to the accomplishment of every variety of bird language. By the use of one or another of these expedients—all of which were logically necessary to her theme—it was unavoidable that Kwey Chao should reduce to a state of incoherent despair every other competitor in turn, with the result that her equivalent had risen to 3 taels 74 cash when the middle period gong was struck, and the press before her stall was continually at variance with the guarders of open space and averters of disorder.

Yet it was this complexity of talent that would seem to have led to Kwey Chao's downfall, although the intricacy of the event has since been the subject of many conflicting essays. It has already been disclosed that the yellow crest's matchless "Invocation" was to be the test and consummating point of that one's achievement, and it was this claim that drew both partisans and those unfriendly to her cause towards the sward before her dais; for never up to then had so exacting a course been set, and on her ability to survive the risks depended the outcome of her endeavour. Faithfully rendered, and an irresistible wave of public acclaim would carry her past the barrier; fail to surmount this one achievement that she had (it was felt) so presumptuously dared, and all her hitherto adequacy would be shattered.

The "Invocation" as rendered in Kwey Chao's now familiar setting is composed of three changes of position, each of variable length: the first a general survey of a yellow crest's life and daily habits; the second a short but duly harrowing interlude wherein one of the race is taken

in a snare and, despite his plaintive song, held captive; the third and culminating strain a rise to ecstasy when he is freed by a sympathetic hand and passes out of sight, singing as he goes and still going singing. Therein lay the snare that was to enmesh the ill-timed bird-impersonator no less, for as she controlled her unprecedented vocal range to its lowest ebb in accord with the despairing prisoner's failing effort, his sublime Excellence's state chair was halted before her stand so that he might make a final choice, and at the same beat of time Kwey Chao realized that she had gone down so phenomenally low, as it were, in portrayed despair, that it was not feasible for her to get up again for the ensuing triumph. She therefore continued to stand in an appropriate poise, with suitably arranged face and lips but without any of the expected sound coming from them.

It was at this benumbing pause that Yellow Crest so capably seized the fleeting opportunity to prove his zeal



"Winged across the blue and disappeared into the singer's unconfined tresses."

and by an act of supreme resource eradicate the last vestige of his obligation. Throughout the day he had lurked in a convenient cypress tree that overhung the ground, unseen and unsuspected even by Kwey Chao herself but deeply concerned with every fluctuation of her progress. When the "Invocation" was reached he—perhaps more than any other of the vast array that stood around—justly esteemed the risk and divined at what precise note Kwey Chao's fatal enthusiasm for lyrical exactitude would lead to her undoing. The testimony of the only onlooker who chanced to observe what took place then—that an object comparably "like a cloud of fire" winged across the blue and disappeared into the singer's unconfined tresses—was universally accepted as unduly fanciful and attributable to the one concerned proving to be a minstrel errant.

With a well-ordained return to normal composure Kwey Chao did not cease to operate her lips and teeth to the extent that the theme required, while the scarcely interrupted melody continued to irradiate the scene more luminously—should that be credible—than before. When the final note passed hence, and Kwey Chao simultaneously ended her facial demonstration, the continuous sounds of approval were so unfeigned that the one signalled out had no excuse for not bowing with submissively clasped hands in all the eight directions, and thus affording Yellow Crest an easy path by which to effect an unobtrusive leave-taking.

When it is related that so precise a high official as the Mandarin Chan Hing Pung, tearing to shreds the hasty record of his preference up to that point, descended from his ceremonial chair and indicated to Kwey Chao that she should occupy it, what further need of words? The Virtuous Cause had once more triumphed.

Times Aren't What They Were.

ONCE upon a time there *may* have been an Englishwoman who didn't talk about her garden, but if so the whole legend has been lost in the mists of antiquity, and at or upon the time we're dealing with in connection with this bed-time story there was a person called Mary who was even more of a gardener than most.

She had an absolutely one-track mind and it led her every single time straight to the rockery, the climbing hop-o'-me-thumb and the twining fiddle-de-dees—every one of which she had always first brought back in her rucksack from Outer Mongolia and then raised from seed.

Her friends—who only wanted to talk about their own gardens—had to hear these stories whenever they went to see Mary; and when she came to see them and it was the turn of their rockeries they *still* had to hear them.

She was therefore definitely unpopular in the neighbourhood.

Then—just when her roses *had* been lovely but were now dead, and her chrysanthemums *were* going to be magnificent but hadn't yet come on—what did Hitler do but start a war and throw out the whole of Mary's scheme for next year's herbaceous border.

Naturally she could, and should, have gone all out on non-perishable, vitamin-charged, energy-forming root vegetables, but Mary's leading characteristic, after her garden-mindedness,

was her *negativism*. (See CONTRARY, Vol. CON to Coz.)

When she found that practically the only bulbs she could get were the kind that would eventually turn into onions she simply went to pieces. Not only was her garden to all intents and purposes gone, but so was her conversation.

Her friends, who were more adaptable to modern conditions and our complex civilization, soon got quite a line on bomb-craters, jam-making, shortage of sugar and the way in which the invaders were likely to invade, even down to the day and the hour—but Mary couldn't make the grade.

She just had this garden-fixation and didn't seem able to get beyond it.

In the end her husband bought her an allotment and left her to get on with it, whilst he instructed their remaining garden-boy, aged fourteen, about putting beetroots on the tennis-court and runner-beans in the rose-garden.

When he had made certain beyond any possibility of doubt that the garden-boy hadn't understood and never would understand the instructions, it seemed rather waste of time to go on giving them, so he said to Mary: "How does your garden grow?" knowing well that she would tell him about it anyway, whether he asked or not, and feeling that there was something rather whimsical about this way of wording it.

But when it came to whimsey, Mary left him standing at the post with the

reply that her garden was growing with cockleshells, and that she'd put bells in it—not saying whether Canterbury, blue, or hare. She also added that there were some land-girls, all standing about in a row doing nothing.

Either a suspicion that his wife had gone off her head, or the thought of seeing these land-girls, caused Mary's husband to make straight for the allotment.

Sure enough, there were the cockleshells, and as they all had cockles inside them one couldn't say that they didn't represent one way of digging for victory, even if only with a pin.

The bells were neither Canterbury nor any other floral variety, but just dinner-bells, mostly E.P., but one or two hall-marked.

They would do for ringing, in the event of an invasion, just as well as any other kind.

As for the row of girls, it was quite a pretty sight in its way as well as being a patriotic one, since all of them were in uniform. And they all said they'd drive cars or vans or tractors, or do secret service work, or fly aeroplanes, or de-code codes, or make munitions, or anything at all so long as nobody asked them to cook.

Mary, in whose madness there had been some method throughout, then threw open the allotment to the public one afternoon in the week, and made quite a little sum of money for the Red Cross. E. M. D.



"So I gave the Quartermaster a couple of bob and got my full kit in no time."

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